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Developing Better Study Habits Through Peer Mentoring

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Developing Better Study Habits and Improving Peer Mentoring

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Desteney Garcia

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family
Studies

Introduction

Studying and peer mentoring skills are not often developed and taught in school. When these skills are not set, students become disengaged with their course content, avoid peer evaluation, and affect their sense of competency. Allowing students to evaluate one another's work helps improve prosocial behaviors, makes them feel more engaged with school, and positively impacts their mentality and competency. To address this issue, I created an interactive lesson for the participants from Pay it Forward and the Center for Learning from the First Tee of Monterey County located in Salinas, California, that had them work together as groups and focus on improving studying skills.

Needs Statement

Schools are not providing students the opportunity to receive and utilize peer feedback. Seeking peer feedback is vital for developing peer mentoring skills, causes students to engage with one another, improves prosocial behavior, and helps with the improvement of study habits. When a student asks a peer for constructive feedback, it teaches them to be engaging, motivates their learning, helps them become less easily distracted from their work, and gives them the support and guidance they need to achieve their potential (Rohrbeck et al., 2003). Teaching students intrinsic motivation (Mabbe et al., 2018) and improving social skills during middle childhood is necessary because they are in a developmental period where they seek competency and reassurance. When a child accomplishes a task, they seek reinforcement to know that they can complete their jobs independently. How a child receives feedback on their

performance on a specific task can impact their confidence, self-esteem, and sense of competency.

Improve Prosocial Behavior

During middle childhood, students' development of prosocial behavior is often encouraged by the activities they partake in, and exposure to socialization teaches them what behavior is appropriate in a social setting. According to the CDC, children between the ages of six through eleven are more likely to be diagnosed with a behavioral problem which is why letting children practice their socializing skills will improve their prosocial behavior. Children who have behavioral issues or mental disorders are likely to exhibit antisocial behavior, have trouble reading and understanding their peer's emotions (Flynn & Rudolph, 2010), which can cause them to feel socially rejected (Hofmann & Müller, 2018) have trouble coping with stressful situations (Flynn & Rudolph, 2010). They are at a higher risk of failing at school (Hofmann & Müller, 2018). Peer acceptance and positive social skills are associated with academic success (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018). Having good study habits can help influence (Tus, 2020) fellow peers to improve their study habits which is why working in groups and participating in peer-assisted learning helps students understand how to cooperate and share ideas while teaching them to be comfortable working together. They work on the problem independently, getting hands-on experience instead of learning from a book or lecture. Instead of teaching students to complete tasks and quickly move on to the next, they should be allowed to reevaluate their work and learn how to make proper adjustments. Research has shown that classrooms that provide more interpersonal interactions (Gray & DiLorento, n.d.) amongst students tend to achieve higher grades

than students in classrooms that offer no exchange. Learning to accept ideas and listen to others helps create acceptance, deeper bonds and promotes an open mind. When students are given the expectation, they are highly likely to engage and interact with their teachers and peers, linked with increased satisfaction (Gray & DiLorento, n.d.) in learning.

Feel Engaged in their Work

Social distancing and remote learning have caused students to be more isolated from their peers, leading to declining participation and decreasing student engagement. According to the Glossary of Education Reform, student engagement refers to the curiosity, interest, and motivation a student expresses towards their learning. Several influential factors are related to student engagement, including attitude, personality, motivation, effort, and self-confidence. Interactively arranging a classroom environment is one way to help students change and work on their cognitive skills, which can impact how they regulate themselves and how they choose to execute their assignments (Simpkins et al., 2020). When a student is engaged, they are more curious, interested, and motivated to learn. Having more engagement in a classroom causes the student to pay more attention to what is being taught. It will make them feel more connected to the content and their fellow students. Keeping up to date with the course can provide the student time to grow and attain their academic achievement, which can be done through studying; the development of excellent and helpful study habits has been linked with enhancing academic performance (Tus, 2020). Moreover, it can even cause an advantage in achieving a higher grade than students with poorer study habits (Simpkins et al., 2020). To help students develop study habits, they need to receive feedback and

review and make edits to improve and help them reach their academic goals. Giving students verbal and clear feedback has been seen as providing clear instructions on what improvements the student needs to make (Gray & DiLorento, n.d.) and diminishes the confusion of what the teacher is seeking.

Developing a Sense of Competency

According to Erik Erikson's Theory of Development, children in middle childhood are eager to partake in tasks and seek evaluation and reinforcement from their peers and adults around them. Students receive an assessment by the feedback (Gray & DiLorento, n.d.) given by their teachers or the social networks (Hofmann & Müller, 2018) they form when they are in school. One way to help students develop a sense of competency is by giving them the responsibility and freedom to reflect on their work and seek revision tips from their peers, which will improve how they provide and request assistance. Reflection is essential for growth because it will enable students to reflect and make adjustments to ideas and learn new ways to make their work more meaningful or effective. When the students find their assignments enjoyable, they are more likely to be engaging, which causes them to have higher persistence. The student can become more attractive in their work, which creates a feeling of satisfaction and competency (Mabbe et al., 2018). This trust teaches the student instructional self-management skills (Rohrbeck et al., 2003) and increases intrinsic motivation and autonomy. One way to make a classroom more open is learning how to communicate lessons and challenges in an autonomy-supportive way (Mabbe et al., 2018), which means not pressuring or suggesting that inability to complete that task means the student is incompetent. To help students not develop a sense of inferiority (Gray &

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DiLorento, n.d.), they need to be given appropriate time to complete and review their work and communicate with their peers.

Theory

According to Erik Erikson's Theory of Development, people go through eight predetermined stages in which they face a struggle to achieve specific psychological needs. They go through a transition period where they have to overcome that stage using the environment and resources surrounding them as they progress. There are typically two paths the individual can follow depending on how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them. Erikson's theory states that children between the ages of five and thirteen are in the phases known as industry versus inferiority. In this stage, they are seeking validation from their peers and caregivers. As a result, the feedback they receive from their teachers and peers while in school will impact how they value their work. It is clear that for a child to develop a sense of competency, they need to be validated in this stage. Students get validated by the grades and feedback they receive from their teachers, coaches, and peers. Although many students can get by doing a minimal amount of work, developing good study habits is vital for teaching students how to prioritize and manage their work. When students receive positive reinforcing feedback, they will feel competent and engaged with their work, encouraging them to continue learning.

Consideration of Diversity

I worked with school-age participants from the First Tee of Monterey County and college students from Pay it Forward. Participants from Pay it Forward are Monterey County residents who got accepted to California State University for a mentoring program.

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According to the First Tee annual review report, Whites and Hispanics made a majority of their participants. Considering that the First Tee of Monterey County is located in Salinas, it is worth noting that there is a high Hispanic population. Although many participants are Hispanic, the location provides its services in English, as was my presentation. The First Tee is an afterschool program that promotes and teaches young children athletic and life skills. Parents can choose to send their children here, and there is a small enrollment fee for participants. This is very helpful for families who work and cannot be with their children when they are out of school. I am part of another organization out of the First Tee of Monterey County called Pay it Forward, which allowed me to view and provide services for their group. The First Tee and Pay it Forward work together by providing First Tee participants a Pay, It Forward mentor. Still, there is only a handful who can participate. After completing my project, I realized how vital it would be to have more engaging mentoring sessions for the participants in both programs. The students will be taught the skills and assistance to improve their social and academic lives while encouraging them to succeed.

Learning Outcomes

The main focus of my project was for students to work on developing better study habits, so after completing my project, they named one study skill they worked on improving during our session. The students were involved in independent or group study, and they learned the task and roles associated with looking. Roles included being a facilitator, note-taker, sharing, and timer. The students walked away from my presentation, understanding what needed to be accomplished while studying and effective with their work and time. Students will be able to name roles and the task that

is typically associated with that job. While having the children work with one another, they read a short story. They then interacted to look for context clues. They provided an example of what sentence they chose that provided foreshadowing.

Method

I created an interactive lesson for participants of the First Tee of Monterey County and Pay it Forward. Overall, I had students focus on reading a short story called The Trouble with Trouble that I provided copies of. (Appendix A.) As the students walked into the classroom, they were placed into either independent study or group study. There were seven participants, consisting of students in either elementary school, middle school, or college. The first thing I did was give the students a presentation (Appendix B) on the importance of studying that also discussed what studying entails. The presentation also mentioned the set roles that students get when working in groups. They learned what task they would need to accomplish if they were assigned that role. They understood why developing good study habits is essential. I told them a few skills that they would be working towards improving while we were together. After giving my presentation, I handed the students a four-page booklet (Appendix C) named My Prediction Chart that kept track of the evidence and vocabulary words they found in their reading. Some students worked in pairs while the others worked independently. The students were given fifteen minutes to read the story and highlight evidence and vocabulary words on the page. Afterward, they had ten minutes to write their proof in their booklet, define any vocabulary words, and form a prediction for the story's ending. Once the students finished their task, they finished reading the short story. They then compared their prediction to the conclusion to see how accurate they could be. In the

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end, we reflected on what we did with our time together and had an overview of the presentation. We discussed what forms of studying an individual could participate in and talked about the tasks and jobs that could be implemented to encourage students to stay on track with their studying. They named one study skill area they focused on improving. They also provided examples for tasks they could have when choosing to study and a sentence example from the short story that helped them foreshadow the ending. This was done on a separate sheet of paper that had the terms and the participants filled out their definitions. (Appendix D)

Results

Completing my project, students left with an understanding that to develop good student habits, they need to understand that studying can be done independently or with the assistance of peers. They were given a presentation that helped educate them on studying. Then all seven of the participants provided their definitions during the final review on what independent studying and group studying are on a separate sheet of paper. They also provided two examples of what task each studying role would be responsible for to understand the importance it plays. While working on this project, the students were working on enhancing study skills, and at the end of the final review, each student named one skill they felt they worked on. The students also had a Prediction booklet that they filled out with sentence examples that they considered provided evidence of foreshadowing. Since some students did the independent study or either studied in pairs, there were five booklets collected.

Discussion

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During the conclusion of my presentation, we reviewed what the students were expected to learn for me to understand better how effective my project was. Although I had a low number of attendees, based on the answers they provided at the end, they received and understood studying in a different aspect. They were able to provide clear definitions of what they were asked. I tied this with Erik Erikson's development theory by having the students interact and verbally share their answers. At first, it was noticeable that students were hesitant to communicate their responses verbally, but once asked to share and received positive reinforcement, it became apparent that they developed a sense of competency and industry. Being nervous about sharing at the beginning showed evidence that they felt inferior due to not being confident in what they were doing. If I were to do anything differently, I would make the project more interactive with the participants from both organizations. It was hard to get participants because due to covid restrictions, the Center for Learning can only hold so many participants to keep safety regulations, and parents have been choosing to keep their children home. This is why my project was open to participants from Pay it Forward. This made me realize that if all participants had the opportunity to engage in a group study session, this would help all individuals feel more included with the organization. The older participants will learn vital skills such as mentoring and collaborating on a grander scale. They will have them work with multiple individuals simultaneously, revealing how influential and crucial they are to teach younger students life and social skills needed to develop positively. The younger student will have more guidance and resources if the organization offers more interactive study sessions and can help make the students feel more included. Feeling included and happy with the organization will help inspire students to stay and grow with

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the program. If I were to do something different, it would be to make the study session more inclusive and inviting instead of focusing on participants who have mentors from Pay it Forward. Allowing more individuals will allow me to incorporate and highlight specific study skills that certain school grades can bring from their educational experience. Mentoring and developing good study habits can always be beneficial and understanding how to learn. The best way to be effective is when a teacher or learning leads to a different understanding.

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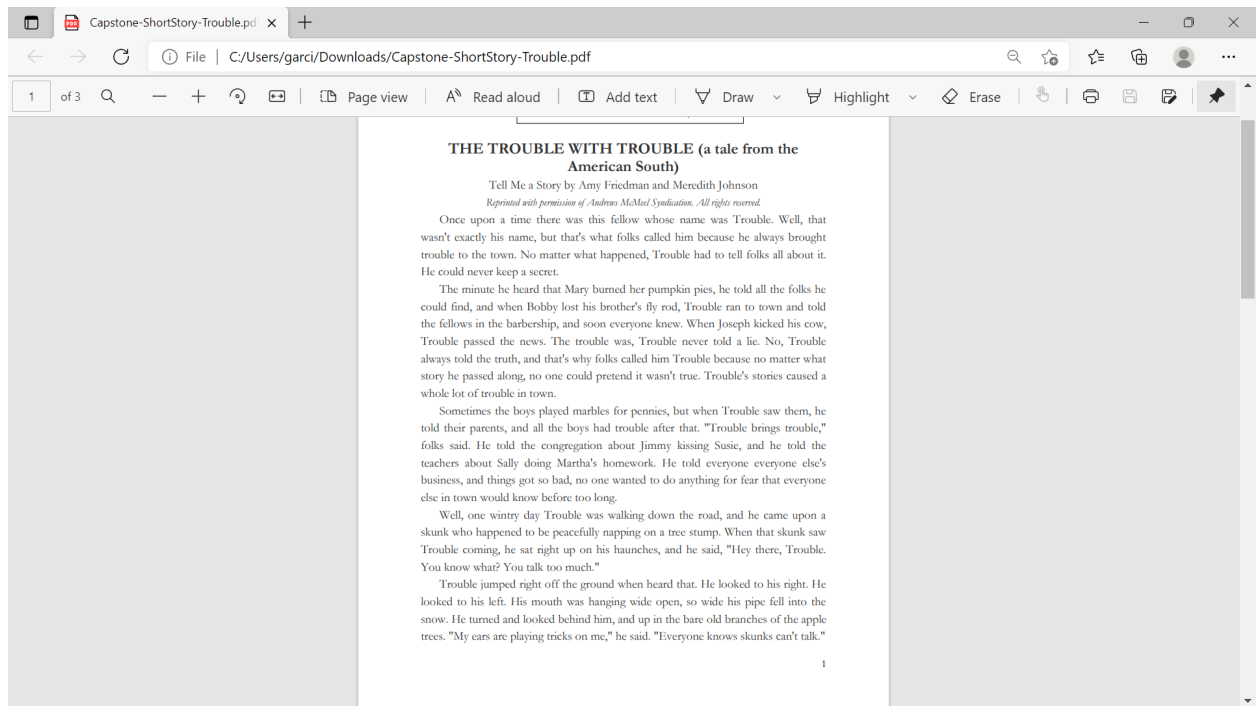
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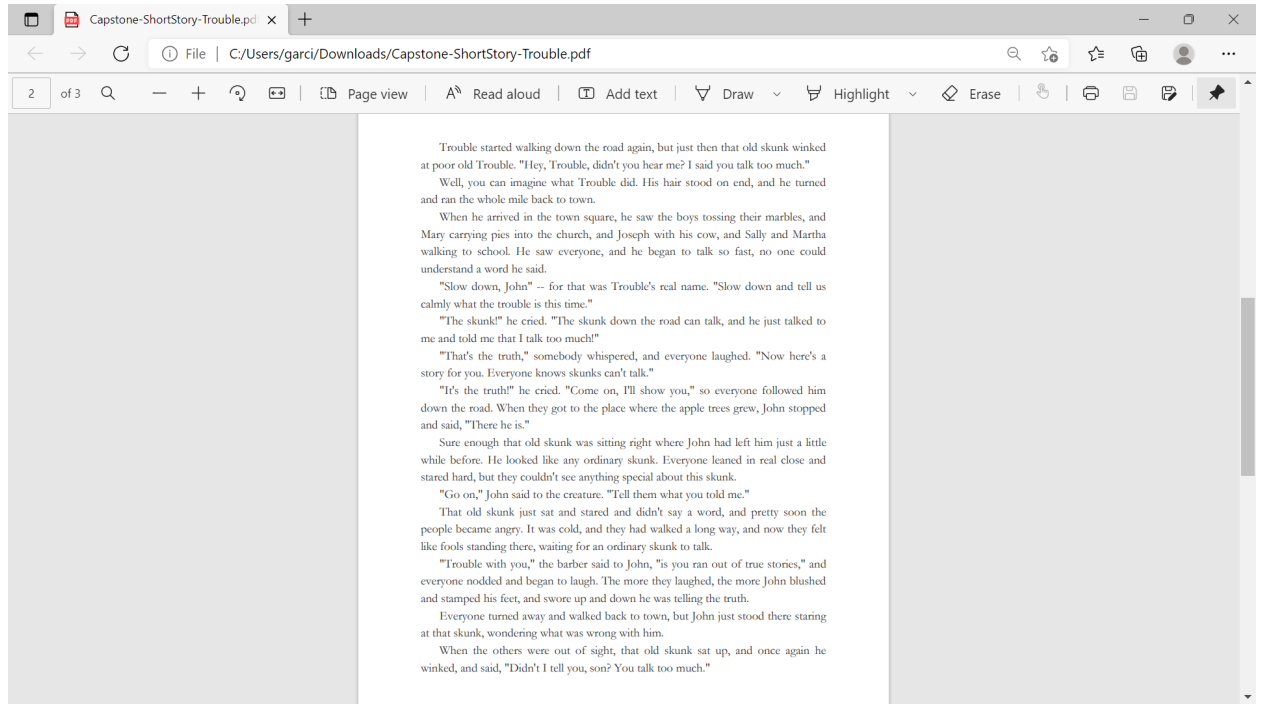
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Appendix A

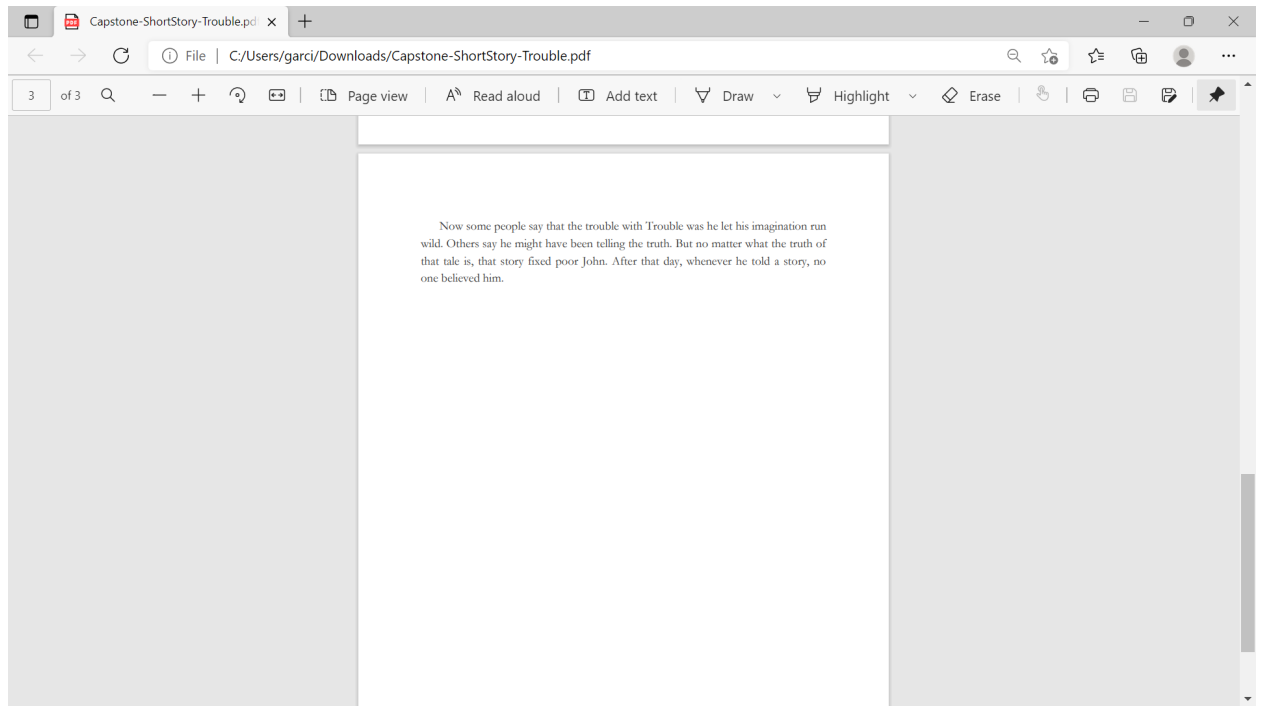
The Trouble with Trouble



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**Developing Better Study Habits
Through Peer Mentoring
By Desteney Garcia**

What are we doing? Improving Study Skills

Improving **comprehension skills** in reading

- **Practicing vocabulary** (context clues)
- **Foreshadowing sentences**
 - **Drawing conclusions**
- **Comparing and contrasting**

Peer-Assisted Learning (Group Roles) or Independent Study

- **Collaboration**
- **Time Management**

Learning Outcomes

1. Name one study skill used
2. Describe the importance of roles in studying
3. Provide a sentence example that helped foreshadow the ending

Agenda

The students are either put in mini groups or assigned to independent study

Students are given a prompt and told to read half the story

- Look for clues in order to create their own predictions of the end of the story
- Highlight sentences that help create their predictions
- Highlight unknown words

Students will read half the story

- Highlight sentences that foreshadow the ending
- Highlight any unknown words

Group 1:

Students will be in groups and fill out prediction clue chart together

- Given roles in groups (timer, notetaker, facilitator, sharer)

Group 2:

- Student will complete prediction chart individually

Group Work vs Independent Study

Group Study: Group of people who meet to study a particular subject

- **Facilitator:**
- **Timer:**
- **Notetaker/Sharer:**

Independent Study: Working on assignment without supervision. Keeps track of accomplishing the work on their own

Benefits of Group Studying

- Eliminates procrastination
- Can help you learn
 - More efficiently
 - New Methods
- Help fill out missing information
- Increase interest and confidence

Benefits of Independent Study

- Develops the ability to work alone
- Self-discipline
- Critical and analytical thinking
- Increased academic performance, motivation and confidence

Group Roles

Facilitator

- Clarifies the goal of the group
- Starts the meeting, keeps the group oriented
- Makes sure the group understands the concepts

Notetaker:

- Keeps record and takes notes of what is being said
- Summarize discussions and provide evidence

Timer/Sharer

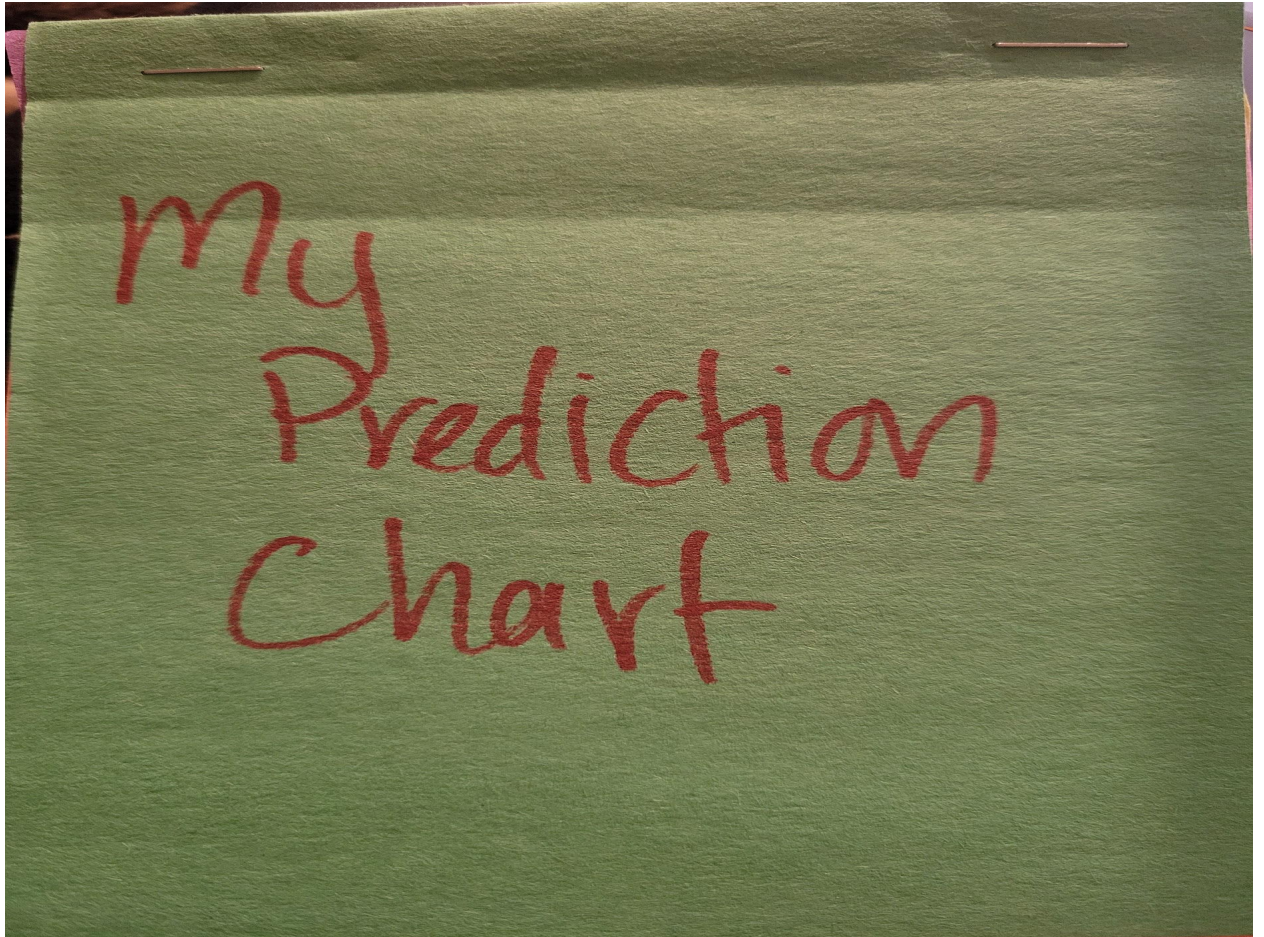
- Deciding how much time to spend on each section of the assignment
- Makes sure that group stays on track to complete the assignment on time
- Makes sure the group knows the shared information
- Shares evidence and work with the class



Now read the short story
Trouble and complete
prediction chart

Appendix C

My Prediction Chart Booklet



Example 1

The trouble was, trouble
never told a lie

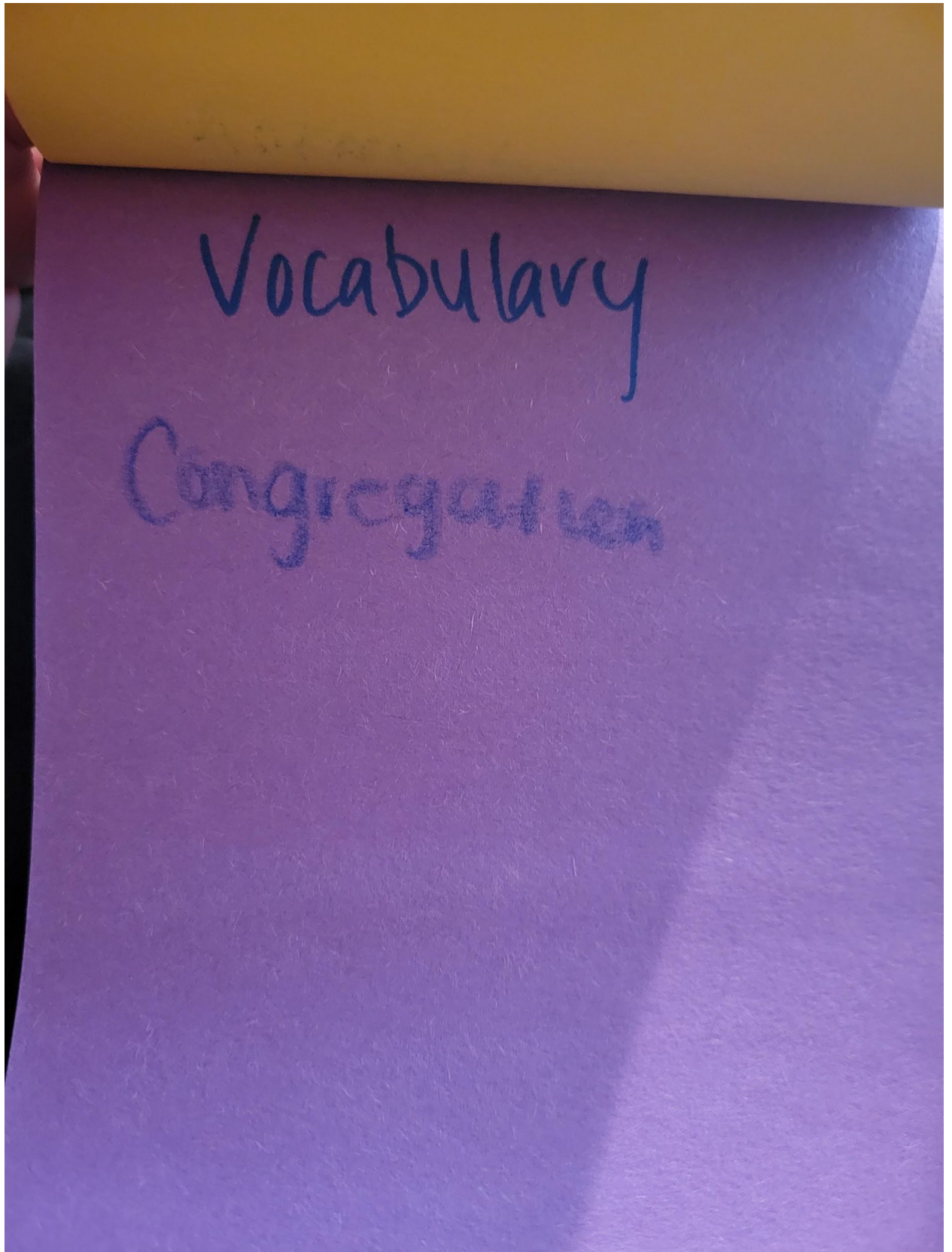
Example 2

"My ears are playing tricks on me," he said.

"Everyone knows
skunks can't talk

Example 3

Thoubles stories
caused a whole lot
of trouble in town?



Prediction

The people in
town will believe
John because he
only tells the truth

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Appendix D

Group Study:

Independent Study:

Note taker:

Timer:

Facilitator:

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Needs Statement

Students are not given the opportunity to develop study habits and peer mentoring skills which can help students

- Improve prosocial behavior
- Feel engaged to their work
- Develop a sense of competency

Erik Erikson's Theory of Development



- Eight predetermined psychostages
- Children in middle childhood are in a determining stage in life
 - Industry versus Inferiority

Participants

- 7 students in total
- Participants from the First Tee and Pay it Forward

- The students are put either into independent study or pairs and given the story *The Trouble with Trouble*

The First Tee of Monterey County - Center for Learning

CSUMB Pay it Forward
Scholarship and
Mentoring Program



- Located in Salinas, California
- Participants range from ages four to seventeen
- Aimed for minorities, low-income youth, youth with disabilities, and at-risk youth

Method

- There were a total of seven participants who attended
 - Three females and four males
 - 3rd Grader, 6th Grader, 8th Grader,
 - 1 College Sophomore, 2 College Juniors, 1 College Senior
- Four students were assigned to study in pairs
- Three people were assigned to study independently

Students are given a presentation on the difference between group study and independent study

They learn why independent study is important

Students learn what roles can be assigned during studying and the importance it plays

After given the presentation, students are told to read their short story

- Students are told to read the short story *The Trouble with Trouble*
 - Their task is to highlight vocabulary words and sentences that help foreshadow the ending
 - The students are given fifteen minutes to work on their assignment

- After completing the first part of their task, the students then had another fifteen minutes to work on their prediction chart book
- The students make their prediction and then compare it to the ending of the story
- After, we reflected on what examples they provided
- Addressed the types of studying they participated in and then discussed the roles they had and why the roles matter
- We did a final review and they provided their own definitions on a paper

Learning Outcomes

At the end of my presentation students will be able to

1. Name one study skill utilized
2. Describe the importance of roles in studying
3. Provide a sentence example that helped foreshadow the ending

Results

Learning Outcome by Outcome

- Students will name one comprehension skill used today

- All seven students were able to name one study skill utilized during my project

- Provide a sentence example that helped them foreshadow

- All seven students were able to provide textual evidence that foreshadowed the ending

- Discuss the importance of roles in studying

- All seven students were at least able to name one task associated with a study role

Discussion

- Was this project successful?
 - Response from students
 - Is it consistent with the theory? How?
- I believe the project was successful in teaching the students how to be efficient and effective when studying and why it is important
 - Positive feedback from the students when they were leaving the project
 - Participants paid attention well and were engaging with the content and each other

Discussion

- How can you be more inclusive?
 - What would you do differently?
- One way to be more inclusive would have been to advertise the project more to get participants to want to attend
 - Time was a constraint but I would have liked the opportunity to perform my project a few more times in order to gain more participants and evidence

Questions?

Thank you!

Desteney Garcia